

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MARSEILLE 030

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT FR

SUBJECT: JOURNALIST'S EVALUATION DEFFERRE'S PRESENT PROBLEMS

PARIS FOR MAGEE/DOBRIN

IN DISCUSSION YESTERDAY, VETERAN JOURNALIST FRANCOIS LAINES, DIRECTOR REGIONAL BUREAU OF "AGENCE ECONOMIQUE ET FINANCIERE" AND "LE NOUVEAU JOURNAL" MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON PROBLEMS FACING GASTON DEFFERRE, MARSEILLE MAYOR, DEPUTY AND PRESIDENT OF SOCIALIST GROUP IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

1. DEFFERRE'S MARRIAGE TO EDMONDE CHARLES-ROUX HAS HAD EFFECT OF CHANGING HIS PERSONAL SOCIAL CONTACTS AND PUT HIM IN CONSTANT TOUCH WITH "HAUTE BOURGEOISIE". THIS HAS TAKEN TOLL OF SOME LONG ESTABLISHED FRIENDSHIPS. WIFE'S POLITICAL VIEWS HAVE IRRITATED CONSERVATIVES AND HER SOCIAL STANDING AND DILETTANTISM IN POLITICS IS RESENTED BY "PURISTS" OF THE LEFT.

2. DEFFERRE'S PRESS GROUP IS FACED WITH FINANCIAL PROBLEMS THAT COMPLICATE HIS LONG RANGE PLAN OF EVENTUALLY BUYING "LE MERIDIONAL" MARSEILLE'S RIGHT WING DAILY. HE HAS ONE YEAR OPTION BUT TIME IS RUNNING OUT (SEVERAL MONTHS LEFT). IF HE DOES NOT ACT, CONSERVATIVE AND RIGHT WING ELEMENTS MAY RAISE NEEDED SUM. THIS WOULD BE MAJOR REGIONAL SETBACK FOR DEFFERRE.

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3. COMMUNISTS HAVE INCREASED SNIPING AT DEFFERRE AS "ANTI COMMUNIST" CLOSE TO MITTERAND AND IMPORTANT NEGATIVE ELEMENT STANDING IN WAY OF TRUE "PEACE" AND COOPERATION BETWEEN PC AND PS. RECENT COMMUNIST CAMPAIGN AGAINST US MARINE TRAINING AT CAMP CANJUERS WAS IGNORED BY DEFFERRE'S NEWSPAPERS. THIS HAS CAUSED MORE FRICTION WITH CP.

COMMENT: LAINES IS SOLID PROFESSIONAL WITH LONG EXPERIENCE AND GOOD CONTACTS, FACT THAT DEFFERRE HAS RECENTLY REDUCED PAGES OF "LE PROVENCAL" AND SPOKEN TO HIS EDITORIAL STAFF ABOUT CUTBACKS IN FACE OF HIGH OPERATING COSTS SUPPORTS COMMENT ON FINANCIAL PROBLEMS. ALTHOUGH DEFFERRE HAS MAINTAINED SILENCE ON MARINE TRAINING HE RECENTLY CAME DOWN HARD ON US STATEMENTS ON MIDDLE EAST UNDER HEAD "NEW AMERICAN ESCALATION", AND CITED US ACTIONS IN CHILE AS TRUE EXAMPLE OF "ECONOMIC STRANGULATION". IT MAY BE SIGNIFICANT THAT LAINES LED OFF WITH ROLE OF NEW WIFE IN "CHANGING" DEFFERRE. MARSEILLE CONTACTS FROM TAXI DRIVERS TO INDUSTRIALISTS RARELY HAVE ANYTHING POSITIVE TO SAY ABOUT MARRIAGE.

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